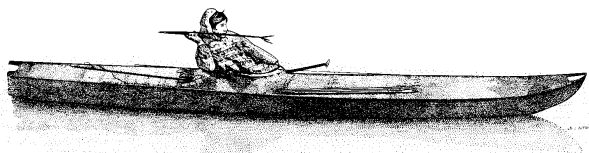




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Federal Subsistence FISHERIES UPDATE



JULY 1999

This is the first of a series of newsletters for Regional Council members on the federal subsistence fisheries management planning process. We include progress updates on many of the fisheries management plan's fourteen issues summarized in last month's package. Since the Alaska Legislature has yet to take action to resolve the subsistence impasse, we're busy preparing for October 1's expansion of subsistence fisheries management on Alaska's public lands and waters. We want to involve you as active participants in the planning process. We hope you find this update helpful and will communicate your thoughts to us, your Council Chairs, and Regional Council Coordinators.

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LeadLINES

ISSUE #3—Federal/State Cooperative Management Strategy

Federal fisheries management poses unique problems, as subsistence species (such as salmon) migrate freely across both state and federal jurisdictions. This requires a coordinated approach between the federal and state management regimes to reduce confusion, ensure the best uses of budgets and staff, and ensure conservation of the fishery resources subsistence users depend upon.

To achieve these goals, the Federal Subsistence Board met three times with the Commissioner of Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game; and the Chairs/Vice Chairs, Board of Fisheries and Board of Game. For convenience, we call this assembly, the "Summit group". These meetings took place on September 25, 1998; April 30, 1999; and June 28, 1999.

During the April 30 meeting, the Summit group appointed a workgroup of four members each from federal and state staffs. The



federal-state workgroup was tasked to develop an integrated management system approach for fish and wildlife, consistent with Federal and State laws. This approach would provide a system for cooperation and coordination between federal and state boards, agencies, and advisory groups.

During their May 3-5, 1999 meeting, the Federal Subsistence Board invited two Regional Advisory Council chairs to participate in the next Summit group's meeting held June 28. The appointed council chairs were Dan O'Hara of the Bristol Bay Region, Willie Goodwin of the Northwest Arctic Region, and alternate Ron Sam of the Western Interior Region. These chairs attended preparatory meetings and both Dan

and Willie were present at the June 28 Summit group meeting.

At this meeting, the federal-state working group presented an initial report. Their report proposed a regulatory process and addressed coordination of in-season decision-making, subsistence allocations, regulation of customary trade, fisheries harvest and stock assessments, and data management.

The Summit meeting concluded without a consensus on one part of the report dealing with the regulatory process.

Throughout this process, the Federal Subsistence Board has clearly supported stronger coordination between the Federal and State management systems consistent with its mandate under Title VIII of ANILCA.

The Federal Board has expressed a desire to continue the dialogue with the State representatives on the Summit group on these issues.

Contact: Tom Boyd at 1-800-478-1456.

fishWHEELS

ISSUE #1—Organization, Staffing and Budget

One of the biggest challenges in staffing federal subsistence fisheries management is the need to improve the accuracy and timeliness of information on the fish runs and on harvests.

In early comments on the federal fisheries regulations, many Regional Council members expressed concern about accuracy of existing fisheries data, particularly during commercial seasons when ADF&G announces emergency order openings.

In mid-June, the Board established a subcommittee to develop an organizational blueprint for federal fisheries information gathering. The six members have diverse backgrounds in fisheries management, working with tribes, and working in the current Federal subsistence program.

The subcommittee talked with the people at the parks, preserves, wildlife refuges, and national forests to identify critical information gaps. There is a lot of attention on the intensively managed salmon runs. Many field stations also highlighted the importance of other species, like whitefish, sheefish, and burbot, in the annual subsistence cycle.

The subcommittee report recommends a unified interagency program to gather and analyze information

on fish stock status and trends, on subsistence harvests, and on traditional environmental knowledge. There would be new field work, including cooperation with tribes and villages, to gather information. In addition, a central staff would provide statistical analysis and study designs to insure the accuracy of the fisheries management information.

The new information organization is an important part of effective federal subsistence fisheries management, but it is not the whole story on staffing.

Throughout August, the Staff Committee will be developing broader recommendations on staffing and budget. They will take into account the needs for fisheries information, along with ideas for fisheries program staff in the field stations and on the Regional Teams, new staff to work with the Regional Councils, and new people in regulations and public communication.

Contact Taylor Brelsford or Chuck Krueger at 1-800-478-1456.

FISHtalk

ISSUE #12—Public Outreach

Outreach opportunities continue to involve federal subsistence office staff and representatives. We try to attend regional meetings to provide overviews on the fisheries planning process. Most recently, staff participated at:

Aniak – Vince Mathews and Taylor Brelsford, with ADF&G's Mike Coffing, spoke May 25-26 at the Interior Rivers R C & D Council, Inc. This middle-Kuskokwim River area rural-conservation and development council (funded through the USDA) held preliminary discussions and identified topics and concerns for their area. Issues ranged from numbers of hunting guides or accurate harvest surveying to protecting freshwater species, limiting boat engine horsepower, and coordination between enforcement, guides, agencies, and the public.

Bethel – Bill Knauer spoke at the Kuskokwim River Working Group on September 9, 1998. The group were very interested in the extent of Federal

contracting efforts in the collection of fisheries data, and wondered about contracts with local tribes or villages.

Chistochina – Helga Eakon and Bob Gerhard attended the Tribal Summit July 15-16, presenting overviews of fisheries and the *tribal fisheries project inventory* (see related story in "NETworking", page 3). The Tribal Summit was a coordinated effort between the Chistochina Village Council, Native Village of Eyak Traditional Council, and the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium to work on establishing a Copper River Fisheries Commission representing the four groups (including the Eyak of Cordova and villages of Mentasta, Chistochina, and Chitina) and expressing concerns about wetlands management and protection.



fishHOOKS

ISSUE #6—Petitions for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Over the past century, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture have exerted their authority off of federal lands only a handful of times. The circumstances for them to act has to be truly extraordinary. Each of the extraterritorial jurisdiction cases involved significant court battles.

Federal regulations allow these Secretaries to accept petitions requesting that they exert authority over hunting, fishing, or trapping activities occurring on non-federal lands.

Those activities must interfere with subsistence hunting, fishing, or trapping on the public lands to such an extent as to result in a failure to provide the subsistence priority provided for in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

Currently a team is putting together the procedures and information necessary for someone to petition the Secretaries to exert their jurisdiction and to protect the subsistence priority.

Some of the factors to present will be:

— *The impacted subsistence hunting, fishing, or trapping must have historically taken place on Federal lands or waters; and,*

— *The petitioner must demonstrate*

substantial, factual evidence that the failure is a direct result of hunting, fishing, or trapping activities occurring off of Federal lands.

The Federal Subsistence Board will assemble information with the pertinent Regional Advisory Council(s), the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, and any other appropriate entities. The Board will assemble information and accept public testimony to assist in a thorough analysis in order to develop their recommendation to the Secretaries.

The subsistence office will publish the final procedures on October 1, 1999.

Contact: Bill Knauer at 1-800-478-1456

NETworking

ISSUE #2—Cooperative Management with Tribes, Villages and Regional Organizations

Section 809 of ANILCA recognizes the value of cooperative projects with the State and Alaska Native organizations. The federal fisheries program will involve new cooperative agreements with regional tribal associations, villages, and regional fisheries organizations.

As a first step, the Regional Coordinators prepared an inventory of more than 50 current and recent fisheries projects involving tribes, villages, and regional organizations. A good example would be the Nulato River counting tower, sponsored by the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association in cooperation with the Nulato Tribal Council, the BIA and ADF&G. Stevens Village is working with the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and ADF&G to study the pike population in the Dall River.

Another important example of how local and regional organizations can cooperate to resolve complicated resource issues is found in cooperative management plans, like the 40 Mile caribou plan, or the North Slope musk ox plan.

To complete the information gathering phase, we are reviewing community harvest survey work conducted by several regional tribal associations under Section 809 cooperative agreements.

During August, we will be working on policies and procedures for a systematic cooperative agreement program. We want to be able to identify priorities among information needs, preferred approaches, and examples of successful approaches.

At this point we hope to announce the cooperative agreement program and begin discussions for proposals during the winter of 1999-2000.

Contacts: Taylor Brelsford at 1-800-478-1456, or Ida Hildebrand at 271-4138.

Dates

Aug 2 Federal Subsistence Board Late August

- Federal Subsistence Board Meeting to prepare for fisheries implementation
- Second Fisheries Update Newsletter for Council members

September 15 Complete Public Communications Materials and Outreach Packets

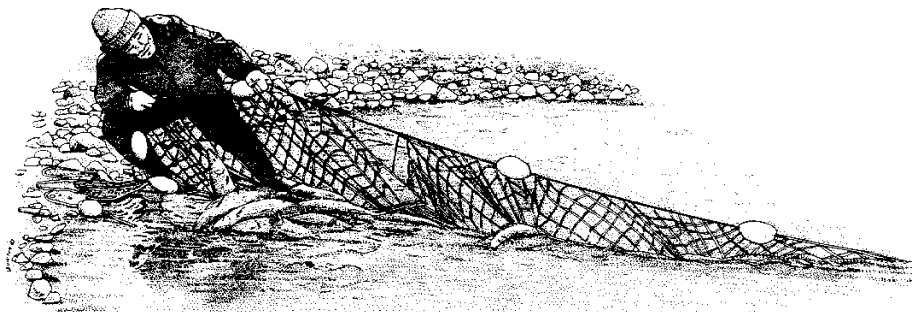
October 1 Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations come into effect for the Spring 2000 fishing season

[For Regional Council fall meeting dates, see page 4]

BAITlines

REGIONAL COUNCIL FALL MEETINGS

September 28-29 Kodiak-
Aleutians, King Cove
October 5-6 Bristol Bay, Naknek
October 6-8 Eastern Interior, Fort
Yukon
October 8-9 Seward Peninsula,
Shishmaref
October 12-13 Yukon-
Kuskokwim Delta, Quinhagak
October 12-14 Western Interior,
Aniak
October 14-15 Southcentral,
Anchorage
October 19-20 Northwest Arctic
and North Slope, Anchorage
October 27-28 Southeast,
Angoon



FLOATnotes

ISSUES #5, 7, 8, 9 –Regional Council structure, customary trade, training/education needs and options, and annual regulatory process

While work is continuing on all fourteen issues of the federal subsistence fisheries implementation plan, these progress updates may be of interest to Regional Council members.

Regional Council structure—Information gathering is commencing, including possible options for ongoing coordination with the three Yukon River Regional Councils.

Customary Trade—Staff are identifying guidelines and information to help Regional Councils define customary trade in their regions.

Training/education needs and options – The Federal Subsistence Board is planning a field trip to the Yukon River to learn about the fall chum fishery.

Annual regulatory process

– A proposed fisheries schedule is being readied, based on the wildlife process as a model. The schedule coordinates with related processes (such as nominations, state regulatory process) to the extent possible. The schedule will not be final until later this year.

Let us know...

Are there other topics you think we should be addressing as we plan for the fisheries expansion or in future updates? What's working well? What should we consider changing? What's your reaction to our current plans and goals? What are your concerns about subsistence fish harvests and runs?

Your involvement is essential to the planning process. Please write, fax, or E-mail us, your Council chairs, or Council Coordinators.

REELways

Other issues: We are reporting progress on those issues we think are of most interest to Regional Council members in this newsletter. We will be updating you with more information next month.

Any comments or suggestions for the next federal subsistence fisheries newsletter update need to reach our federal subsistence management office (address below) by **Wednesday, August 18, 1999.**

Thank you!



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Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service

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